

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND AREA-E

2012 PACIFIC COD SEASONS CLOSE DECEMBER 31

2013 PARALLEL PACIFIC COD SEASON OPENS JANUARY 1

EMERGENCY ORDER # 2-GF-E-01-13

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Area E parallel Pacific cod season closes to pot and longline gear and the state-waters Pacific cod season closes to jig gear at midnight December 31, 2012. The parallel Pacific cod season immediately opens to all legal gear types January 1, 2013. Fishermen are reminded that all fish must be landed within 24 hours following the closure of the 2012 seasons and prior to participating in the 2013 season. Parallel Pacific cod season closures for jig and pot gear will coincide with their respective gear sector closures in the federal Central Gulf of Alaska Regulatory Area (CGOA), and the closure for longline gear will coincide with the federal closure of the less than 50 foot hook and line (<50' HAL) gear sector in the CGOA.

Fishermen are reminded: 1) to obtain a PWS **non-exclusive area registration** from ADF&G prior to fishing; 2) of the requirement for fishermen using pot or longline gear in parallel Pacific cod fisheries to have a functioning, activated, NMFS-approved **vessel monitoring system** (VMS) as described at http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/ole/ak_faqs.html; and, 3) to adhere to the federal **seabird avoidance measures** (SAM) which are required in all longline fisheries for groundfish in the Outside District of PWS. Additional information describing SAM can be found at: <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/protectedresources/seabirds/guide.htm>.

The National Marine Fisheries Service has implemented a **new Observer Program for 2013** which changes how observers are deployed, how the program is funded, and the pool of vessels and processors covered under the program. Vessel operators participating in directed halibut and/or state-water parallel and GHF groundfish fisheries are encouraged to become familiar with how they may be affected by this new federal program. Information and frequently asked questions on the restructured observer program can be found at: <http://www.fakr.noaa.gov/sustainablefisheries/observers/> or by contacting the Observer Program office in Seattle at: (206) 526-4195 or (206) 526-4194.

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Directed fishing for all groundfish species is closed in waters within 3 nautical miles of two Steller sea lion rookeries within PWS and certain waters are closed to fishing with groundfish pot gear (Figure 1, 5AAC 28.250(a)). For specific regulatory language regarding Steller sea lion protection areas contact NMFS in Kodiak at (907) 481-1780 or <http://alaskafisheries.noaa.gov/regs/679b22.pdf>.

Bycatch, in aggregate, may not exceed 20% by weight of the directed groundfish species on board a vessel. Lingcod may not be retained prior to July 1. All rockfish caught must be retained and any rockfish in excess of the 10% bycatch allowance be reported as a bycatch overage on a fish ticket with the proceeds surrendered to the state. A vessel may not land or have on board more than a combined total of 3,000 pounds of all rockfish species within five consecutive days.

Pacific cod may be retained at a 20% bycatch allowance to other directed fisheries for vessels using longline, pot or mechanical jig gear. This amount is in addition to the 20% aggregate bycatch allowance for all other retained species. However, the landed weight of Pacific cod retained as bycatch may not exceed 20 percent of the directed finfish species on board the vessel.

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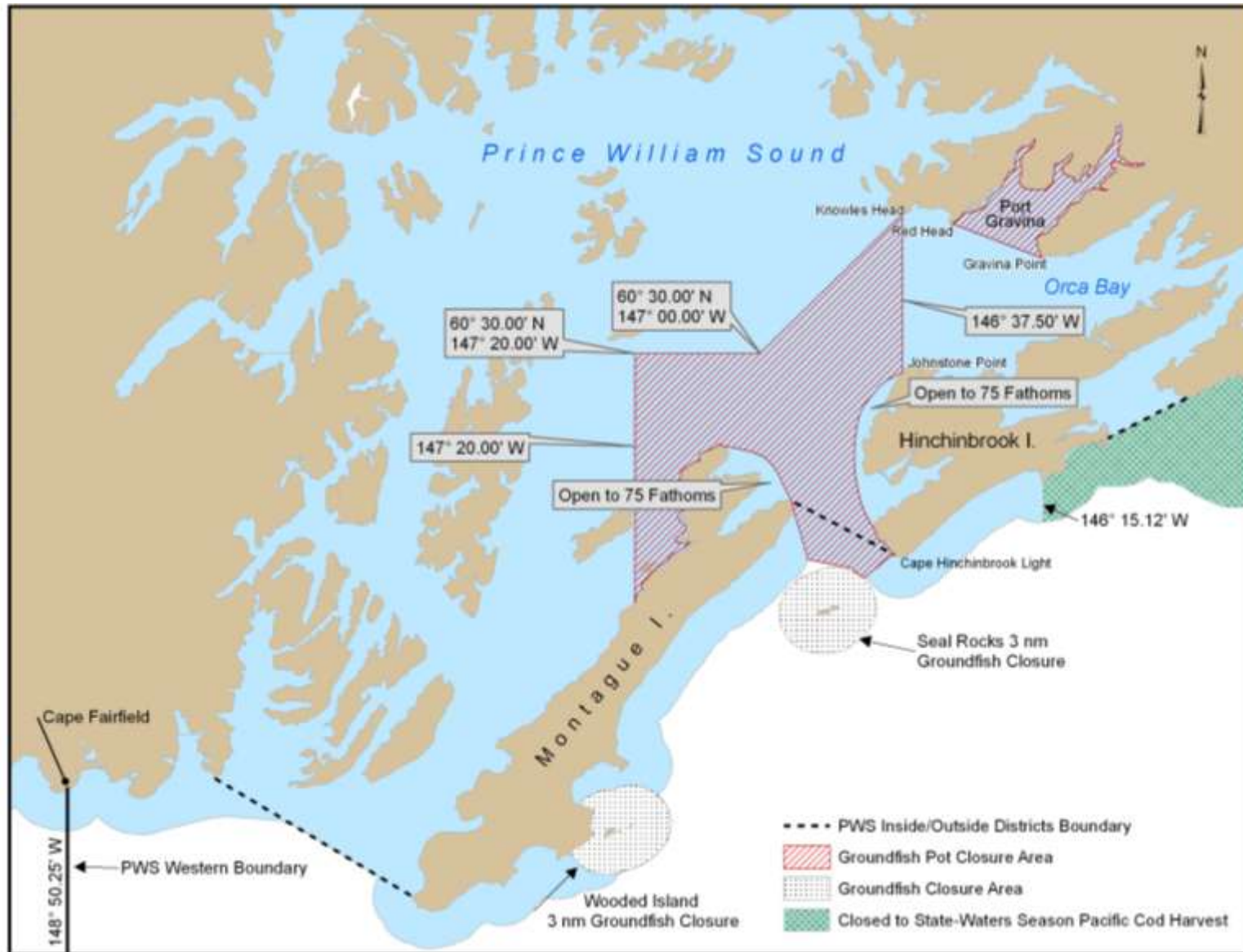


Figure 1. Prince William Sound closures to groundfish pot gear, groundfish fishing, and to the state-waters Pacific cod season.

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